

Waste Reduction Task Force

Governments' Role-Work Group #3

Conference Call – October 18, 2007

Summary

Work Group Members Participating: Andy Ashford-Memphis, Shawn Lindsey-Athens, Bryon Fortner-Sevierville, John Evans-Knox County, Mimi Keisling-Rutherford County.

Member Not Participating: Lee Norris-Chattanooga (out of state)

Facilitator: Bob Knight, TDEC

The conference call began at 10:00 AM/CDT-11:00 AM EDT and continued for one hour and fifteen minutes. The first step was to select a spokesman for the group. Andy Ashford was named to report group recommendations to the full Task Force.

The second order of business was a review of the Government Role Group issues raised by the Task Force at the September 27th meeting. The ensuing discussion centered on the perceived responsibility of the different levels of government with regards to the state's solid waste reduction goal.

Both from the discussion today and from individual members' statements emailed prior to the conference call, there is consensus of opinion on one major issue:

- **Municipalities within a solid waste region should be held equally responsible with the counties for achieving the waste reduction goal.**

With this degree of accountability, each county and municipality would be required to maintain a viable solid waste collection and diversion program of its own or share this responsibility through a binding cooperative agreement with others in the MSW planning region. Any entity not achieving the waste reduction goal, regardless of whether the region reaches its overall goal, would be subject to penalty. Said penalty must be clearly defined and strictly enforced.

Each county and municipality would be required to provide all information necessary for completion of the state's Annual Progress Report to the entity responsible for preparing this report, subject to penalty for failure to do so.

First Work Group Recommendation to Task Force: Municipalities should be equally responsible with counties for achieving the waste reduction goal.

State Role:

- Increase waste reduction grants for rural counties and municipalities that have limited access to recycling facilities or equipment.
- Continue with a reduction goal for the state and each MSW Region.
- Assess penalties for those entities within regions that do not meet the waste reduction goal or do not provide information for the Annual Progress Report.
- If possible, extend the deadline for the Annual Progress Report for an additional 30 days to allow larger regions to secure report information from municipalities and private industry.

Solid Waste Planning Region Role:

The concept of the MSW Planning Board should be re-assessed. The board function, make-up, statutory authority, and even the necessity of the board need to be analyzed. Many of these boards only meet once a year, or less often, and accomplish very little when they do meet. During the conference call, each participant was questioned about his or her region's planning board activity. To the best of their knowledge, only two of the boards were reported as meeting regularly and attempting to accomplish their intended goal.

Also, some of these boards cover too large a territory to be truly effective. The boards need to meet on a more regular schedule and provide better guidance and more current information to their membership. The board make-up should also include an environmental person, solid waste director or sanitation manager, from each county and each municipality, or group of municipalities, plus representatives from private industries that contribute large amounts of solid waste.

Second Work Group Recommendation to Task Force: The concept of the MSW Planning Board should be re-assessed, taking into consideration the board function, make-up, authority, and whether the board is needed.

County Role:

The county should continue to serve as the responsible entity for the regional planning board and comply with reporting information requested for the county and its municipalities, with assistance from the municipalities in these matters. It should also continue with responsibility

for its own waste reduction activity. The county should cooperate and, to the extent possible, work with its municipalities, sharing ideas and techniques, facilities, and equipment that promote waste reduction.

Municipality Role:

Each municipality within the solid waste region should have a solid waste plan and make a 'good faith' effort to meet the plan's provisions. The municipalities should cooperate with the county, sharing information, equipment, services, and facilities where possible. Information relative to waste generation, disposal, recycling, and other diversion must be provided to the county for inclusion in the Annual Progress Report.

Development District Role:

Limited discussion of this role seemed to indicate that it should continue as is.

General:

Some discussion centered around government entities being responsible for only that waste which is handled by government. Generators of waste not handled by government should be required to reduce their waste in order for a region to truly achieve waste reduction.